

## Chapter Eight

# Land Use

### Existing Development

The City of Westminster features two distinct types of land use within its corporate limits: the traditional, relatively dense development found in the older parts of Westminster, and the suburban, less dense development located on the outskirts of the downtown area. Both types of development feature residential and commercial uses. Industrial uses are primarily located along the MD Route 27 and MD Route 97 corridors.

The older development in Westminster is centered on the intersection of Main Street and MD Route 27 (Railroad Avenue & Liberty Street), extending primarily east and west along Main Street. The streets in this area were developed years ago in a grid pattern, and buildings were constructed with smaller front and side yard setbacks than in the more recently developed areas. Residential and commercial uses are often located in close proximity, encouraging pedestrian travel. Residential uses range from single family detached housing to apartments located above businesses. Several small apartment buildings are located in this area as well as single family dwellings converted to apartment units. Commercial uses include restaurants, retail, and professional services of limited intensity. These commercial uses are focused on Main Street with smaller concentrations located on Pennsylvania Avenue and East Green Street. The dense, mixed-use pattern characteristic of downtown prevailed in the City until the 1950s, when MD Route 140 was completed as a bypass for Main Street.

The construction of MD 140 made feasible the development on lands surrounding the existing City. Residential uses are separated from commercial and industrial uses in most areas. With the exception of some residential areas, this more recent development is characterized by wide, curvilinear streets and larger setbacks between buildings. The first major residential development of this type occurred west of MD Route 31 in the 1960s. Single-family detached homes comprise the majority of dwelling units in the more recently developed parts of Westminster, although some townhouses, apartments, and condominiums have also been constructed. Commercial uses in the MD 140 corridor include a shopping mall, large retail stores primarily located in ‘strip mall’ developments, and franchise restaurants. Many of the structures built on the City’s prime industrial land, located north of the City along MD 97, have been designed as ‘flex-space.’ This concept has encouraged a mix of commercial and industrial uses to develop along the MD 97 corridor.

### Open Space

The majority of open space in the City of Westminster is public land. Pocket parks provide small areas of open space throughout the City and offer opportunities for active recreation. Open space lands created in new residential subdivisions through the City’s Cluster Subdivision ordinance supply additional acreage for outdoor recreation. Residents and visitors

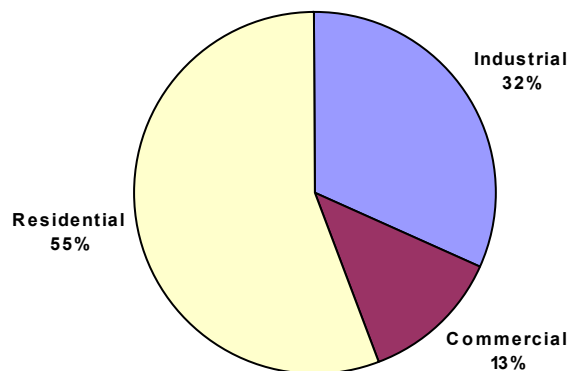
may also utilize the open space created by public school grounds. Several County-maintained parks and the Carroll County Farm Museum provide open space areas on the periphery of Westminster. Additional information on parks and recreation can be found in *Chapter 11, Community Facilities*.

A number of farms in Carroll County have been permanently preserved from development through agricultural easements; however, there are no active farms located within the City's corporate limits. There are no significant conservation easements or forested lands in the City of Westminster; however, two properties adjacent to the city limits do contain agricultural preservation easements, and a third property located just outside the Westminster Community Planning Area is also subject to a preservation easement. The majority of land in Westminster has been developed, subdivided for development, or placed under public open space protection for recreational purposes.

## Vacant Land

Approximately 22% of the land located within the City of Westminster is vacant; however, the City has recently annexed much of this land and development plans are currently being reviewed for more than half of the vacant acreage in the City. Vacant areas include several parcels designated for commercial use located adjacent to MD Route 140, and three large properties designated for residential use located west of Littlestown Pike along MD 140. Vacant industrial acreage exists along the MD Route 97 North corridor. Development proposals have been submitted for all three residential tracts. A summary of vacant land in Westminster is provided in Table 8.1 and Figure 8.1. The graph shows that approximately 486 acres are available for residential development, or 55% of the total vacant land. Another 275 acres are available for industrial uses and 110 acres are available for commercial development.

**Figure 8.1. Vacant Land by Land Use in the City of Westminster, 2004**



Source: City of Westminster Department of Planning and Public Works.

**Table 8.1. Vacant Properties by Proposed Land Use  
in the City of Westminster, 2004**

<b>Subdivision</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Proposed Land Use</b>
<b>RESIDENTIAL LAND</b>		<b>486.3</b>	
Humbert Property	SE corner E Green St & Sycamore St	1.8	Urban Residential
Alt Property	SE corner Lincoln St & Charles St	0.8	Urban Residential
Langdon Property	W side Observation St, George St vicinity	5.0	Urban Residential
Horosko Property	W side Observation St, George St vicinity	6.8	Urban Residential
Norris Property	SE corner Charles St & S Church St	0.6	Urban Residential
Westminster Housing Inc	E of South Colonial Avenue	1.1	Urban Residential
Village of Meadow Creek	N of MD 140 / WMC Drive Intersection	119.5	Suburban Residential
Koontz Property	N of MD 140 / E of WMC Drive	7.5	Suburban Residential
Royer Terrace	SE Corner Royer Rd & MD 31 Int	2.6	Suburban Residential
Rinehart Property	MD 140 & Main Street Intersection	1.8	Suburban Residential
Jandy Property	S of Uniontown Rd, W of Stacey Lee Dr	4.5	Suburban Residential
Roop Mill	S of MD 140, W of Wampler Lane	89.6	Suburban Residential
RJ Maring Property	S side Uniontown Road	1.7	Suburban Residential
Tennant Property	Btwn MD 140 & Gorsuch Rd	2.1	Suburban Residential
Ridge Terrace	S of Fitzhugh Avenue	10.0	Suburban Residential
Windsor Overlook	W of Fitzhugh Ave, E of Old New Windsor	1.3	Suburban Residential
Scott Property	S side W Main Street adj to College	1.2	Suburban Residential
Riley Property	Btwn Uniontown Rd & W Main St	1.5	Suburban Residential
Poole Property	W of MD 97, S of Meadow Branch Rd	1.1	Low Density Residential
Bolton Hill	W of MD 97, E of Meadow Branch Rd	118.0	Low Density Residential
Cliveden Reach	N of MD 140 on Charingworth Road	5.8	Low Density Residential
Bair Property	N of MD 140, S of Cliveden Reach	6.4	Low Density Residential
Roth Property	N of MD 140, E of Meadow Branch Rd	1.8	Low Density Residential
Griswold Property	W of Tahoma Farm Rd, S of Firestone Rd	12.1	Low Density Residential
Carroll Lutheran Village	W of Wakefield Valley	52.8	Low Density Residential
Riley Property	W side Long Valley Road at City line	0.9	Low Density Residential
Hart Property	W side Long Valley Road	1.2	Low Density Residential
Bodnar Property	NE corner Avalon Ln & Long Valley Rd	0.6	Low Density Residential
Fenby Farm	E of Sawgrass Court	20.0	Low Density Residential
Fenby Farm Sec 2	Tahoma Farm Road	3.9	Low Density Residential
Furnace Hills Section 2	W of MD 31	2.6	Planned Residential

Subdivision	Location	Acres	Proposed Land Use
<b>INDUSTRIAL LAND</b>		<b>275.2</b>	
Bixler Property	E of MD 97 opposite Kalten Rd.	44.8	Restricted Industrial
Essich Farm Property	S of West Branch Trade Center	13.9	Restricted Industrial
West Branch Trade Ctr	N of Tech Ct/Magna Way intersection	61.5	Restricted Industrial
Bolton Hill	W of MD 97, E of Meadow Branch Rd	35.0	Restricted Industrial
West Air Business Ctr	W of MD 97, N of Airport Drive	23.8	Restricted Industrial
CC Air Business Center	W of MD 97, S of Airport Drive	6.0	Restricted Industrial
Meadowbranch Ind Park	S of Meadow Branch, N of Kriders Church Rd	18.3	Restricted Industrial
CC Commerce Center	E of MD 97, S of Magna Way	6.8	Planned Industrial
Westminster Tech Park	W of MD 97, N of Magna Way	65.1	Planned Industrial
<b>COMMERCIAL LAND</b>		<b>109.8</b>	
College Square	SW corner MD 140 & MD 31	14.5	Business
Westminster Marketplace	N side Market Street	2.9	Business
Baughner Property	SW corner Uniontown & MD 31	1.6	Business
Westminster Crossing	SE corner Woodward Rd & Englar Rd	10.7	Business
Englar Business Park		5.2	Business
Tennant Properties	NE corner Cranberry Rd & MD 140	0.5	Business
	N of MD 140, W of Cranberry Rd	0.6	Business
Church of the Open Door	NE corner Center St & Malcolm Drive	30.5	Business
Booth Property	E of N Colonial Ave, W of 140 Vil Shop Ctr	3.5	Business
Chilcoat Property	NE corner MD 31 & Uniontown Rd	2.8	Neighborhood Commercial
Village of Meadow Creek	N of MD 140 / WMC Drive Intersection	17.0	Neighborhood Commercial
Furnace Hills	NW corner Tahoma Farm & MD 31	20.0	Neighborhood Commercial
<b>VACANT LAND ½ ACRE AND LARGER</b>		<b>871.3</b>	
<b>INFILL VACANT LAND LESS THAN ½ ACRE</b>		<b>45.4</b>	
<b>TOTAL VACANT LAND, CITY OF WESTMINSTER</b>		<b>916.7</b>	

Source: City of Westminster Department of Planning and Public Works

## Current Land Use Patterns and the Comprehensive Plan

Current land use patterns in the City of Westminster generally correspond with the original Comprehensive Land Use Plan adopted in 1985 by the City and Carroll County, partially because a large portion of the land within the City's corporate limits was already developed when the 1985 Land Use Plan was adopted.

A few areas in Westminster have not developed as indicated on the 1985 Land Use Plan map. One significant departure has occurred on the industrially zoned land along the northern portion of MD Route 97. This area was originally intended for industrial uses of a research and development nature, but now contains a mix of light to heavy industrial and commercial uses. The *1998 City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan* recommended the designation of additional commercial land to discourage further intrusion of commercial uses in areas targeted for industrial development. In October of 2003 The Mayor and Common Council of Westminster amended the text of the City's "I-R" Restricted Industrial zone to eliminate a variety of commercial uses previously permitted by right. Combined, these efforts have significantly reduced new construction of commercial uses on the City's industrial land.

A comparison of the 1998 Land Use Plan with the Zoning Map in place in the spring of 2004 indicates that the zoning districts closely follow the land use categories designated in 1998. One significant difference occurs at the Washington Heights Medical Center, with the property classified in the City's "B" Business zone despite a designation as Urban Residential land on the 1998 map. Other conflicts include a portion of the Koontz Property classified as Low Density Residential despite the more intense residential zoning of the property, and the industrially-zoned Gibbs and Langdon Properties located on the south side of George Street classified as Urban Residential on the 1998 Land Use Plan map. Finally, certain parcels along the MD Route 31 corridor remain residentially zoned despite a Neighborhood Commercial designation on the Plan map. A second difference between the 1998 Land Use Plan and the zoning is found in the text of the Zoning Ordinance, where the permitted land uses do not always correspond with the planned uses. Efforts such as the elimination of commercial uses in the City's I-R zone will reduce these differences.

The 1985 Land Use Plan also designated the desired land uses for the entire Westminster Community Planning Area. The land uses designated for the environs of Westminster consisted primarily of conservation and low- to medium-density residential, with some areas of agricultural and industrial uses. Since the *City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan* focuses on land within the corporate limits of the City of Westminster, this plan only includes updated land uses for those areas within the City's corporate limits. The environs portion of the 1985 Land Use Plan is currently being examined and revised by the County. Additional information regarding the coordination of planning activities between the City and the County can be found in Chapter 13, Interjurisdictional Coordination.



The development of land uses on these parcels that are appropriate to the character of the existing downtown is a primary concern of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan. Many of these parcels front the main thoroughfares of the City. Development on these lots will impact the identity and experience of old-town Westminster. Land uses that are compatible with the character of the district will reinforce the existing historic and pedestrian-friendly patterns of development. Compatible uses would replicate the mixed-use nature of downtown and capitalize on building and population density. Intrusion of suburban-style development would disrupt this pattern and introduce low-density auto-oriented uses that would fail to maximize the utility of the land. Land use regulations should require development along the MD 27 Corridor to complement and enhance the existing character of the downtown area.

The Housing chapter identifies a scarcity of moderately priced, affordable housing in Westminster. The lack of quality rental housing and a shortage of single family attached dwellings and condominiums are primary causes of affordable housing issues in the City. Homogenous proliferation of single-family detached units can price a significant number of prospective homebuyers out of the local housing market, forcing those who work in the City to live in other communities some distance away. The reservation of residential land for single-family detached units, without provision for alternative housing types in proportion to market demand, encourages the conversion of existing homes into apartment units. The creation of a zoning district specifically for townhouses, condominiums, and apartments would encourage new construction of a diversity of housing types. Such a district would preserve parcels most suited for these more intense residential uses. In addition, the aggregate quality of affordable housing would improve as new structures take advantage of advancements in construction materials and practices.

## **Proposed Land Use**

The City of Westminster Comprehensive Land Use Map (Map 8.2) contains the planned land uses located within the corporate limits. The updated Comprehensive Land Use Map largely reflects the land uses designated in the 1998 Land Use Plan; however, the expansion of the corporate boundaries since 1998 requires appropriate designations of additional land not examined in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan.

The most significant change in the Land Use Plan from 1998 to 2004 is the inclusion of recently annexed lands and their land use designations into the plan. Together, these annexations total 483 acres and add significantly to the City's developable land. In some cases, the land use designations of these properties remain unchanged from the 1985 Land Use Map. In other cases, the properties received a waiver of zoning from the County Commissioners upon annexation. Waivers of zoning have been issued by the Commissioners for a variety of reasons, including a change in the character of the surrounding area, a response to increased demand for a land use type, and to protect environmentally sensitive features, among others. The land use designations of recently annexed properties reflect the City's intention for the land to develop in accordance with the zoning adopted at the time of annexation. In general, these annexations have provided for additional residential land south and west, additional industrial land north, and additional commercial land east of the 1998 corporate boundaries. These designations affirm and extend the general land use patterns established in 1998.

The conflict between the zoning and land use designation of the Washington Heights Medical Center is resolved by placing the parcel in the Commercial land use category on the 2004 Land Use Map. The center provides a necessary local service with minimal impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. Traffic patterns are not appreciably impacted and the development matches the suburban character of adjacent uses on Washington Road.

The conflicts between the zoning and land use designations for the Koontz Property, Langdon Property, and Gibbs Property resulted from sectional map amendments filed after the adoption of the 1998 Land Use Plan. The Mayor and Common Council rezoned the Koontz Property to a more intense residential zone than specified in the Plan to accommodate additional residential demand within the city limits. The Mayor and Council ultimately excluded the Gibbs and Langdon properties from a rezoning of industrially zoned properties to residential uses precipitated by the 1998 Land Use Plan. Site-specific considerations related to topography and access were found to favor industrial zoning for these parcels. The 2004 Land Use Plan map affirms these conclusions by redesignating the Koontz, Gibbs, and Langdon Properties to land use categories that match the existing zoning.

The Neighborhood Commercial designation remains on the 2004 Land Use Plan map for selected properties along the MD Route 31 corridor. The Neighborhood Commercial zone is intended as an overlay zone; it is expected that these properties would be rezoned concurrent with the submittal of a development plan to the City. The existing zoning of the targeted properties allows for reclassification to the Neighborhood Commercial zone; thus, the Land Use Plan map and the zoning do not conflict.

In response to the threat of suburban-style development in the older sections of the City, the 1998 Comprehensive Plan created two new land use designations for the downtown area. In December of 1999, The Mayor and Common Council adopted two new zoning classifications, the 'D-B' Downtown Business zone and the 'C-C' Central Commerce zone, that codified regulations that would protect and promote the existing character of the commercial district. The Maryland Route 27 Corridor study provided an opportunity for the City to further refine the desired vision of development character in the downtown area. The result of this work was the creation of the 'MUI' Mixed Use Infill zone. The Mixed Use Infill zone expands upon the goals of the two downtown zones by requiring a vertical mix of uses, establishing design guidelines, and providing for shared parking among uses. Properties identified in Map 8.1 are eligible for reclassification into the Mixed Use Infill zone.

The Mixed Use Infill zone also responds to the affordable housing shortage in the City. The zone allows for multi-family housing at a density of up to 25 dwelling units per acre as a principal permitted use in combination with a retail or office use on the first floor. The construction of multi-family dwellings in the downtown area provides increased housing choice for residents and a more active 18-hour environment in the heart of the City.

The 2004 Land Use Map retains the land use designations created in 1998 for the downtown area as the Mixed Use Infill zone aims to build upon the character of the current



Central Business and Downtown Business classifications. The definitions for these two categories appear below, followed by definitions for the remaining land use categories.

Central Business: Central Business is located in the downtown commercial district of Westminster, focused along Main Street. This land use allows for a broad mix of commercial uses that are compatible with denser development and nearby residential neighborhoods abutting downtown Westminster. Dimensional requirements allow new development of a similar layout to existing buildings, enhance the pedestrian orientation of downtown, and provide for convenient customer and client parking.

Downtown Business: Downtown Business consists of those commercial areas within Westminster's downtown that are located outside of the Central Business District. The intent of this district is to provide a mix of residential and office uses, with convenient, neighborhood-level retail and services that serve both the residents and employees in Westminster's downtown. The retail and service uses must be compatible with the quiet nature of the residential and office uses. Dimensional requirements enhance the pedestrian orientation of downtown, provide for convenient customer and client parking, and establish building heights that are compatible with the residential uses found in the Downtown Business and surrounding Zoning Districts.

Neighborhood Commercial: Neighborhood Commercial areas are generally located in the more recently developed portions of Westminster, primarily along the Maryland Route 31 corridor where commercial space is limited. The intent of this designation is to provide convenient retail and service uses to residents in close proximity to the site. The types of uses permitted are more limited than the uses permitted under the Commercial land use designation found along MD Route 140. All permitted uses must be compatible with the quiet nature of the adjoining residential neighborhoods and park areas. The design of proposed developments in the Neighborhood Commercial designation must accommodate motor vehicles while also accounting for safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists. Emphasis is also placed on minimizing the number of vehicular access points and the visual appearance of development.

Commercial: Commercial areas are located primarily along Maryland Route 140. Uses are retail and service oriented, and design criteria for this district accommodates automobile access and high traffic volumes.

Industrial: Industrial areas are found on the outskirts of downtown Westminster and in several industrial parks along the Maryland Route 97 (N) corridor. This land use allows for a variety of industrial and accessory uses. Regulations ensure that industrial users do not become a nuisance to surrounding properties. Three industrial zones of varying intensity exist to separate incompatible industrial uses. Commercial development is largely excluded from these zones to preserve prime industrial land.

Planned Residential Development: A planned development allows for greater variety and flexibility in the design of residential developments and a more diversified mix of housing types. Applicants may request a rezoning to a Planned Development zone in the Urban and Suburban Residential areas. Specific requirements for this type of use are listed in the Zoning Ordinance.

Urban Residential: The majority of land designated for Urban Residential development is located within the older developed sections of the City. This is a high density residential classification which allows for five to six units per acre and a mixture of housing types.

Suburban Residential: Suburban Residential areas are located primarily in the Uniontown Road Corridor, North of Maryland Route 140, and along South Center Street. This designation allows for four dwelling units per acre and a variety of housing types.

Low Density Residential: Land designated for Low Density Residential is found in the Wakefield Valley area and north of Maryland Route 140 in the western portion of the City. Two units per acre are permitted on land designated as Low Density Residential, and single-family detached housing is the only permitted type in these areas.

Housing for Older Persons: Land within the Housing for Older Persons designation is generally located in existing neighborhoods where there is adequate vacant land available for high-density senior housing. As a result of the significant projected increase in the older age groups identified in Chapter 3, it is necessary to provide greater opportunity for the development of age-restricted housing units in the City. The demand for and shortage of such housing that does not offer age-related services is particularly acute. This type of development will afford older persons the opportunity to live in a convenience-driven community that provides larger housing units and preserves personal independence in the home environment.

Conservation: Areas designated as Conservation are scattered throughout Westminster on public parkland, stream valleys, areas of steep slopes and soil limitations, and areas where very low-density development is necessary to protect natural resources. Development on Conservation land is not anticipated.

Public Use: The Public Use designation is an overlay designation that indicates properties that are publicly owned, exclusive of park areas. If a public use were eliminated, the underlying land use would guide future development.

The total acreage for each land use is found in Table 8.2.

**Table 8.2. Land Use Designations, 2004 Land Use Map**

<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Zoning Equivalent*</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Central Business	C-B, C-C	36	0.9
Downtown Business	D-B	73	1.9
Neighborhood Commercial	N-C	42	1.1
Commercial	B, PRSC	526	13.5
Industrial	P-I, I-R, I-G	450	11.5
Planned Residential Development	PD-4, PD-9	242	6.2
Urban Residential	R-7,500	336	8.6
Suburban Residential	R-10,000	803	20.6
Low Density Residential	R-20,000	1224	31.3
Conservation	C	173	4.4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3905</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* The land use designation and the zoning of a property may conflict in certain cases. Acreage totals refer to land use designations as shown on the Land Use Plan Map. Some of the conflicts between land use designation and zoning are explored in detail on pages 8-7 and 8-8.

Source: City of Westminster Department of Planning and Public Works

### **Future Population and the Land Use Plan**

Several of the issues discussed above can be used to determine the availability of Westminster to handle the projected future population. Topics that need to be considered include vacant residential land, additional land that has not been designated for residential uses, approved residential units that have not yet been constructed, and existing vacant units. Information regarding available acreage and approved units can then be used to determine the population capacity currently available in Westminster (Table 8.3).

**Table 8.3. Estimated Available Residential Capacity in Westminster.**

Available Land or Units	Acreage	Zoning	Units per Acre <sup>#</sup>	# of Units	Persons per Unit	Population Capacity
Humbert Property	1.8	R-7,500	4.2	7	2.5	17
Alt Property	0.8	R-7,500	4.2	3	2.5	8
Langdon Property	5.0	R-7,500	4.2	21	2.5	52
Horosko Property	6.8	R-7,500	4.2	28	2.5	70
Norris Property	0.6	PD-9	4.2	6*	2.5	15
Westminster Housing Inc	1.1	R-7,500	4.2	4	2.5	10
Village of Meadow Creek	119.5	R-10,000	2.8	188*	2.5	470
Koontz Property	7.5	R-10,000	2.8	21	2.5	53
Royer Terrace	2.6	R-10,000	2.8	4*	2.5	10
Rinehart Property	1.8	R-10,000	2.8	4	2.5	10
Jandy Property	4.5	R-10,000	2.8	12	2.5	30
Roop Mill	89.6	R-10,000	2.8	190*	2.5	475
RJ Maring Property	1.7	R-10,000	2.8	4*	2.5	10
Tennant Property	2.1	R-10,000	2.8	5	2.5	12
Ridge Terrace	10.0	R-10,000	2.8	17*	2.5	43
Windsor Overlook	1.3	R-10,000	2.8	2*	2.5	5
Scott Property	1.2	R-10,000	2.8	3	2.5	7
Riley Property	1.5	R-10,000	2.8	4	2.5	10
Arnold Property	8.0	R-10,000	2.8	15*	2.5	38
Poole Property	1.1	R-20,000	1.4	2	2.5	5
Bolton Hill	118.0	R-20,000	1.4	189*	2.5	472
Bair Property	6.4	R-20,000	1.4	8	2.5	20
Roth Property	1.8	R-20,000	1.4	2	2.5	5
Griswold Property	12.1	R-20,000	1.4	16	2.5	40
Carroll Lutheran Village	52.8	R-20,000	1.4	73	1.5	110
Riley Property	0.9	R-20,000	1.4	1	2.5	2
Hart Property	1.2	R-20,000	1.4	1	2.5	3
Bodnar Property	0.6	R-20,000	1.4	1	2.5	2
Fenby Farm	20.0	R-20,000	1.4	28	2.5	70
Furnace Hills Section 2 <sup>^</sup>	2.6	PD-4	n/a	30*	2.0	60
<b>Total, Vacant Land</b>						<b>2,134</b>
Approved, Unbuilt Units				596	2.5	1,490
Vacant Units (per 2000 Census)				325	2.5	812
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>4,436</b>
<sup>#</sup> Multiplier adjusts for yield lost to roads & unbuildable land						
<sup>*</sup> Number of Units Proposed by Developer						
<sup>^</sup> Condominium Units						

Source: City of Westminster Department of Planning and Public Works

As shown in the population capacity table, the current available residential land and housing units in Westminster provide the capacity for an additional 4,436 people; however, the population projections show an increase of 6,684 people by the year 2025. The difference in these two figures is 2,248 people or approximately 900 households. Based on currently permitted zoning densities, an additional 214 acres of Urban Residential land would be required to accommodate the increase in Westminster's population. This figure also equates to 321 acres of Suburban Residential land or 643 acres of Low Density Residential land. The need for additional industrial and commercial land to expand the City's employment base (see Chapter 5, Economic Development) is not included in these projected acreage totals.

While a portion of the population could be accommodated through the addition of mixed-use structures in the downtown area, the City of Westminster would need to annex land that is appropriate for dense residential development in order to accommodate the remainder of the projected population. Once the City provides enough land to accommodate the projected in-migration, additional residential annexations should only proceed after a careful review of the City's infrastructure, growth policies, and adjusted population projections. An alternative to additional annexations would be a revision of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the consideration of single-family attached and multi-family housing. Commercial and industrial annexations require a separate set of criteria based upon the specific services demanded by these uses. The annexation process is discussed in more detail in Chapter 13, Interjurisdictional Coordination.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The following goals and objectives have been developed based on the above analysis of land use challenges and opportunities facing the City of Westminster.

### **Goal 1:      Ensure compatibility of adjacent land uses.**

Objectives and recommended actions:

1.      Address compatibility between adjacent residential and commercial or industrial uses.
  - a.      Ensure conformance of commercial development near residential areas with the design guidelines of the Neighborhood Commercial Zone and other applicable design review procedures.
  - b.      Continue efforts in Downtown Westminster that address the appearance of this commercial area and improve access for pedestrians from nearby neighborhoods.
  - c.      Ensure sufficient buffers between commercial or industrial uses and adjacent residential areas.

2. Infill development along MD Route 27 and Main Street should be compatible with downtown redevelopment efforts and plans.
  - a. Rezone appropriate parcels to the Mixed Use Infill Zone.
  - b. Ensure consistent and contiguous pedestrian and bicycle access along MD Route 27.
  - c. Consider the addition of on-street parking along MD Route 27.
  - d. Relocate overhead utilities to the rear of properties where possible.
  - e. Work with developers to determine and construct improvements to MD 27 that would be needed to accommodate infill development.
3. Ensure protection of sensitive environmental areas.
  - a. Complete the actions for Chapter 2, Environmental Resources, which addresses the protection of sensitive environmental features.

**Goal 2: Allow for a full range of residential uses.**

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Allow a mix of residential unit types in Westminster neighborhoods.
  - a. Review regulations, development review processes, and staff procedures to determine whether it is appropriate to streamline the process for approval of Planned Development applications.
  - b. Support and encourage development offering a mix of housing types, including mixed-use development that provides easy access to downtown amenities.
  - c. Provide opportunities for the construction of compatible infill within the older parts of Westminster and the development of “neo-traditional” type neighborhoods on vacant land.
  - d. Refine language in the residential zoning districts that specifically address accessory apartments and the conversion of accessory buildings to dwelling units.
  - e. Encourage use of the Cluster Subdivision Ordinance.

- f. Develop design guidelines for townhouses and single-family detached houses, such as varying setbacks between adjacent units, as well as variation in architectural treatment, in order to address concerns regarding compatibility within or adjacent to existing neighborhoods.
- 2. Ensure the availability of quality single-family attached and multi-family housing units.
  - a. Consider the creation of a zone exclusively for townhouse and/or multi-family development.
  - b. Identify appropriate sites to zone for single-family attached and multi-family development that would be compatible with existing development and would not overburden public facilities.
  - c. Consider the adoption of design guidelines for multi-family housing developments.

**Goal 3: Provide a sustainable balance of new commercial, industrial, and residential land to meet existing and future demand.**

Objectives and recommended actions:

- 1. Expand the corporate limits where appropriate to accommodate projected residential growth and provide needed jobs and services in the City.
  - a. Coordinate with the County to identify parcels that are appropriate for annexation as industrial or commercial land.
  - b. Extend water and sewer service to annexed lands when appropriate.
- 2. Ensure that expansions of the corporate boundary do not impose an undue burden on the City's public facilities and infrastructure.
  - a. Review potential annexations for adequate public facilities and roads.
  - b. Ensure that annexation occurs in-step with the need projected by future demand.